



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

EPA awards \$85 million contract to assess abandoned uranium mines

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation Council members were pleased to learn on Wednesday, that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded an \$85 million contract to Tetra Tech Inc. to assess abandoned uranium mines on or near the Navajo Nation. According to the EPA, Tetra Tech Inc. will initially assess uranium contamination at 30 abandoned uranium mines.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) said the announcement is a step in the right direction.

“For decades, Navajo people have continued to suffer from the effects of uranium mining and today’s announcement will help to determine what type of cleanup efforts will be needed at abandoned uranium sites,” said Speaker Bates.

The announcement also states that Tetra Tech Inc. will partner with Navajo Technical University and local businesses to train Navajo people in assessment and cleanup work. Additionally, Tetra Tech Inc. will also initiate an internship program at NTU to provide students with hands-on technical work experience.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), who represents communities that have many people who have experienced health problems due to abandoned uranium mines, said he is optimistic about the \$85 million contract, but added that more needs to be done to help victims and cleanup mines.

“It is good news, but we should keep in mind that there are still people living with health issues every day due to abandoned mines and there are still many mines that present danger to our people,” Delegate Begay said.

Council members have continuously advocated and lobbied at the federal level for victims of uranium mining and in 2015 the Council passed legislation to establish the Diné Uranium Remediation Advisory Commission for the purpose of studying and drawing conclusions about the impacts of uranium mining and uranium processing on the Navajo Nation and to use the studies to issue recommendations for policies, laws, and regulations to the President and the Council.

For decades, nearly 30 million tons of uranium ore was mined on or near the Navajo Nation for the purpose of producing nuclear weapons during the Cold War.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council